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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/607,225	06/26/2003	Gary L. Koteskey	11074/009	5907

27879 7590 08/04/2005

INDIANAPOLIS OFFICE 27879  
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INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204-2033

EXAMINER

CHAPMAN, JEANETTE E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3635

DATE MAILED: 08/04/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/607,225

Applicant(s)

KOTESKEY, GARY L.

Examiner

Chapman E Jeanette

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 January 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-10, 12-14, 19 and 23-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-10, 12-14, 19 and 23-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☒ Other: See Continuation Sheet.

Continuation of Attachment(s) 6). Other: ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF FOREIGN REF.

The final rejection of 5/25/2005 has been withdrawn in view of the newly discovered prior art to Janssen et al (4310372).

**35 USC 103**

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 3, 6-7, 9-10, 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hume (5608998) in view of Bradley et al (6773206) and Janssen et al (4310372).

Hume discloses a molded plastic segment 10 for use in a subterranean structure of the type comprising a cylindrical body made up of at least one tier of segments (figure 6).

Alternatively, Hume discloses subterranean structure having a cylindrical body about a vertical axis made up at least one ring and each ring consist essentially of a plurality of horizontally adjacent segments 10 of molded plastic, each segment comprising:

- A wall segment 10 cylindrically curved about a vertical axis having an inside and outside surface, vertical side edges and horizontal top edges and bottom edges; see figures 1-2 and 6;
- First of vertical side edges 18 including a protruding mating element not vertically tapered;

- A second vertical side edge including a slot 16/14 that is not vertically tapered ;
- The vertically side edges including confronting surfaces adapted to be brought into abutting relationship between adjacent segments of similar construction (figure 4) but the adjacent segments are not in an interlocking engagement .
- The segment comprises a flange 22 protruding vertically from one of the horizontal edges to overlap a portion of the inside and outside surfaces of a vertically adjacent segment; see figure 5;
- A plurality of ribs/dimples 12 on the outside surface;
- A cover 50 contacting the horizontal top edge of the uppermost rings; see figure 6
- Gas seal means for securing the cover to the upper most rings

However, Hume discloses various interlocking fasteners for the horizontal attachment of segments 10. see figures 3 and 5. It would have been obvious to employ and interlocking fastener for the vertical side edges in order to provide a stronger means of attachment avoiding inadvertent detachment of the vertical edges. The interlocking fasteners are not of the dovetail (tapered) type. Such a choice is not viewed as critical to the overall function of the device; one of ordinary skill in the art would have appreciated the types of interlocking fasteners capable in aiding to fulfill the overall and intended function and purpose of the segment. Nevertheless Bradley et al discloses a

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molded segment with vertical side segments with interlocking fasteners. See figure 8. It would have been obvious to employ an interlocking fastener for the vertical side edges in order to provide a stronger means of attachment avoiding inadvertent detachment of the vertical edges as shown by Bradley et al.

For the method claims:

With the above modification of interlocking mating parts, it is clear that the mating elements will be joined by sliding the protruding element into the slot of a ring of segments; it is clear this step is repeated with rings as shown in figure 6. In order to insert the protrusion into the slot it is clear that the ring has to be warped to insert the bottom edge of the protrusion into the top edge of the slot or vice versa joining the top edge of the protrusion to the bottom edge of the slot. Further, Hume teaches stacking one ring upon another of similar structure so that the protruding flange overlaps a portion of one of the inside and outside surfaces of another ring. Hume discloses adding as many rings as needed to form the proper and desired height structure. If one can add to provide the desired and needed height it is obvious that rings can be subtracted if too many rings are added before the adhesive is added. A bonding agent of adhesive is added; the same is compatible with the polymers forming the segments.

*Hume is silent as to the type size of the segments such that the vertical side edges being separated from each other by 120 degrees measured about the vertical axis. Janssen et al discloses a subterranean article having a plurality of segments/ sections 18a-c forming 120 degree segments of the circular device. It would have been*

*obvious to employ the interfitting pieces of Janssen in Hume in order to draw the sections/segments together during assembly and ensure roundness of the fitting.*

Claims 2, 4, 8, 23-24 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the above references and further in view of Benner (5930972) et al and Jones (6357194). The dovetail type mating fastener commonly employed in the building industry. Benner even includes the additional fastening means of protuberances and slots on the mating segments. See elements 46 and 42. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to employ any type of suitable fastening means capable of aiding in the intended use of the structure. It would have been obvious to employ the dovetail type fastener with mating elements on its part such as a protrusion and slot in order to provide a strong and secure attachment means to the structure.

Claims 12, 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hume (5608998) in view of Bradley et al (6773206) and Janssen et al (4310372) in view of Dargie (5265974) and Torngren (3826032). Janssen and Hume discloses a plurality of dimples on a surface of each element or segment capable of providing a location for drilled holes used to mount additional hardware. Hume lacks the additional hardware being netting. Dargie discloses a safety net mounted in a dimpled surface. The safety net includes a plurality of strands. Torngren discloses a net with radial strands and crossing strands coupled to the former. Both include the strands being fixed sufficiently close to each other to prohibit/inhibit accidental entry into the subterranean structure by

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small animals and children but capable of providing entry to a hose and the like. Dargie includes a plurality of fasteners 14,23,35 coupled to the strands for connecting the same to the mounting hardware 20 on the inside surface of the subterranean structure. It would have been obvious to further modify Hume by including this net mounted as recited in order to include the safety feature in an urban environment.

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dargie (5265974) in view of Torngren (3826032). Dargie discloses a safety net mounted in a dimpled surface adjacent 20. The safety net includes a plurality of strands. Torngren discloses a net with radial strands and crossing strands coupled to the former. Both include the strands being fixed sufficiently close to each other to prohibit/inhibit accidental entry into the subterranean structure by small animals and children but capable of providing entry to a hose and the like. Dargie includes a plurality of fasteners 14,23,35 coupled to the strands for connecting the same to the mounting hardware 20 on the inside surface of the subterranean structure. It would have been obvious to further modify Dargie to include radial strands when the manhole is either circular or square to adapt netting to the fit in whatever shape opening.

Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hume (5608998) in view of Bradley et al (6773206) and Janssen et al (4310372) in view of Dargie (5265974) and Torngren (3826032) and further in view of Benner (5930972) et al and Jones (6357194). See above for how references are applied to the base reference.

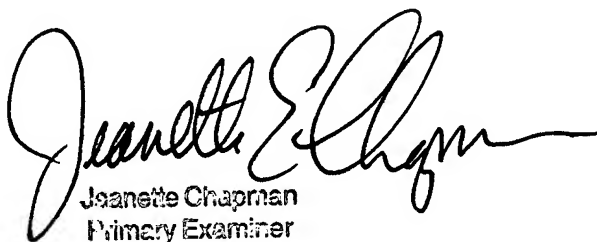


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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chapman E Jeanette whose telephone number is 571-272-6841. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri, 8:30-6:00, every other fri. off.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Jeanette Chapman  
Primary Examiner